

(19) World Intellectual Property  
Organization  
International Bureau



(43) International Publication Date  
1 September 2005 (01.09.2005)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number  
**WO 2005/080374 A1**

(51) International Patent Classification<sup>7</sup>: **C07D 401/12**,  
A61K 31/4439, A61P 1/04

(21) International Application Number:  
PCT/SE2005/000221

(22) International Filing Date: 17 February 2005 (17.02.2005)

(25) Filing Language: English

(26) Publication Language: English

(30) Priority Data:  
0400410-7 20 February 2004 (20.02.2004) SE

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(81) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of national protection available): AE, AG, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BW, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EC, EE, EG, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MZ, NA, NI, NO, NZ, OM, PG, PH, PL, PT, RO, RU, SC, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, SY, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VC, VN, YU, ZA, ZM, ZW.

(84) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of regional protection available): ARIPO (BW, GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, NA, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European (AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, HU, IE, IS, IT, LT, LU, MC, NL, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK, TR), OAPI (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

**Published:**

— with international search report

For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.

(54) Title: NEW COMPOUNDS USEFUL FOR THE SYNTHESIS OF S- AND R-OMEPRAZOLE AND A PROCESS FOR THEIR PREPARATION

(57) Abstract: The present invention relates to an improved method for the synthesis of the (S)- or (R)- enantiomer of omeprazole, characterized in that 2-[[[(4-X-3,5-dimethylpyridin-2-yl)methyl]thio]-5-methoxy-1H-benzimidazole or 2-[[[(4-X-3,5-dimethyl-1-oxidopyridin-2-yl)methyl]thio]-5-methoxy-1H-benzimidazole, wherein X is a leaving group, is oxidized into the corresponding sulphoxide which is obtained as a crystalline compound. Recrystallisation of the thus obtained sulphoxide results in a compound of enhanced chemical and optical purity, which is subsequently transformed into the (S)- or (R)- enantiomer of omeprazole.



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